

City of Alexandria, Virginia

**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**Public Hearing and Regular Meeting**

**Thursday, February 20, 2014, 7:00 p.m.**

**301 King Street - City Hall**

**Council Workroom**

**Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

**Summary Minutes**

**P&RC Members Present:** Judy Guse-Noritake, Chairperson, Jennifer Atkins, Gina Baum, Stephen Beggs, Rich Brune, Judith Coleman, William Cromley, Ripley Forbes, Brian McPherson.

**Excused Absence:** Emma Schutzius.

**RPCA Staff Present:** William Chesley, Deputy Director, Recreation Services; Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director, Park Operations; Jack Browand, Division Chief, Marketing, Special Events and Waterfront Operations; Ron Kagawa, Division Chief, Park Planning Design and Capital Projects; Laura Durham, Principal Planner, Open Space Coordinator; Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant.

**Absent:** Dana Wedeles, Park Planner, James B. Spengler, Director.

**Guests:** Richard Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES), William Skrabak, Deputy Director T&ES, Office of Environmental Quality; Jeanne Gardner, Carolyn Grigione, John Grigione, Kathryn Brown, Marlin Lord, Jennifer Hartenstine, Frank Shafroth, Jim Clark, Bill Rivers, Converse West, Brian Marquis, Brian Noland, Catherine Corp, Bill Hendrickson, Gary Carr, Catherine Hilliard, Jim Durham.

- I. Call to Order by Chair, Judy Guse-Noritake-The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- II. **Presentations:** Please note Item B. was heard prior to Item A.

**B. Update on Stormwater Management and Best Management Practice Facilities,**

**T&ES:** Rich Baier, Director T&ES, William Skrabak, Deputy Director T&ES Environment and Infrastructure. See Presentation - MS4 Requirements & Amendments to the Environmental Ordinance dated February 20, 2014

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRC18Feb2014TESPresentation.pdf>

Baier introduced William Skrabak, Deputy Director, Environment and Infrastructure Services, T&ES. Skrabak has been working with the City's Stormwater Steering Committee led by Deputy City Manager Mark Jinks and comprised of department heads for RPCA, Planning and Zoning, General Services on creating solutions for storm water management in the City. Skrabak reviewed ordinance text amendment change coming up Saturday at City Council and gave brief presentation. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has imposed new regulations on six states and the District of Columbia. Alexandria must meet

these regulations and target reductions. New requirements must be implemented over the next 15 years: 5 % - Phase 1 (2013-2018); 35% - Phase II (2018-2023) years; and Phase III-remaining 60% (2023-2028). To meet pollution reductions targets-will require treating approximately 2,000 -2,400 acres, or 25% of water processed in the City, using Best Management Practices (BMP's). The estimated cost to meet required targets is between \$75-\$100 million dollars. Core strategies include identifying large regional facilities including Block 19 on Eisenhower Ave.; retrofitting existing facilities; treating public rights-of-ways, and capturing/piggybacking on space in existing projects. In addition the City recently received a \$1.2 million grant to retrofit Lake Cook. The Chair expressed concern with possible loss of open space. Skrabak said capturing sediment will help improve water quality and he considers open water part of open space.

Cromley suggested installing storm sewers at catch basin at each street corner. He said this will help make a massive dent in meeting the City's storm water requirements. Skrabak said there are filteras, but they are limited in size and can only handle a quarter acre. In the future when they are trying to reach the 60% target, they will look at every measure to hit target.

Baier said the cost to retrofit small multiple individual BMP's and ongoing maintenance will be higher. Retrofitting Lake Cook, which is large, will help capture more of the credits needed City-wide as well as Block 19. Other sites in the City that will require storm water treatment at parks along the Waterfront. Staff is also looking at "Potential Retrofit of Cameron Station Pond", outreach will be done to the community.

Changes to Environmental Management Ordinance: Skrabak said the City had to adopt a more stringent ordinance to comply with state regulations; ordinance went to the Planning Commission last February, and will go City Council this Saturday. The ordinance is triggered where there are more than 2500 square feet of land disturbed. This may affect RPCA's Draft Large Park Plans if more than 2500 sq. ft. of land is disturbed a BMP may be required, some plans have conceptual placeholders (Cameron Station, Four Mile Run). Skrabak said the other area where City is more stringent than the state, is that the City protects natural intermittent streams, while the state only requires protection of perennial streams. Some exceptions exist to these requirements.

#### Commission Comments:

Cromley asked why the City would have more stringent requirements than the state, and said this is prohibitive, and may impact affordable housing. Skrabak said that instructions from the Storm water Steering Committee, was that the best time to make improvements is when a site is being redeveloped to save costs.

The Chair said the placeholders for BMP's in some of the City's large Park Master Plans, will have a huge impact on open space. Maintaining useable open space is important as well as water quality. The cost of implementation discussed-looking at open ground to put in surface BMP's may be the cheapest but not the best design. Placing BMP's under parking areas and artificial turf fields are other options to be explored. The P&RC will focus on having quality solutions which make good use of open space. As we look at the Citywide Large Parks Master Plan this will be important. Baier said T&ES is not looking to reduce useable open space in parks, and has been discussing with staff designing fields as BMP's working with engineers and landscape architects. Skrabak said the first one is expected to be built at Jefferson Houston School. There are technical requirements - soil that allows infiltration under field. The Chair recommended retrofitting all right- of-ways and streets in parks, as green alleys and green roads as opposed to asphalt. She said the City should identify how much impervious surface exists in the City and determine an annual goal of converting some if these to pervious surfaces. Chinquapin Park would be a good starting point to return part of pavement to green space. What she is hearing from T&ES over the last year are more

creative and diversified solutions and this is encouraging. Skrabak said that T&ES is hiring a new consultant to manage storm water projects. In response to the Chair's question, Baier said that T&ES will assume responsibility for the maintenance of all BMP's in the City given the completion of the finance and funding structure.

#### **Update on King Street Bike Lanes**

Baier said the City Attorney, Traffic and Parking Board will make a recommendation on Monday February 24, 2014 to City Council and on the Director's T&ES decision to move forward with the King Street Bike Lane proposal at the March 15 legislative meeting. The Chair said the recommendations made by the P&RC stand; she thanked Mr. Baier and Mr. Skrabak for attending meeting.

#### **A. Presentation and Public Hearing on Citywide Parks Improvement Plans.** Laura Durham, Park Planner - See Copy of Presentation

(<http://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=76605>)

Laura Durham, Principal Planner and City Open Space Coordinator provided background on and gave presentation. The Draft Citywide Parks Improvement Plan was made available to the public on-line for comments. Durham said the public hearing process will focus on the highlights of each of the six park plans, and provide an opportunity for questions and comments. She said some parks such as Fort Ward have a separate process. Cost estimates for projects in the plan include soft costs only if each project is done individually. Priorities are based on safety, community needs, lifespan of facility, and the Community Needs Assessment. The proposed timeline is contingent on RPCA receiving CIP funding. Staff is looking at the current 10 year CIP, but additional funding will be needed. Durham reviewed the highlights of each of the six Draft Citywide Parks Improvement Plans: Four Mile Run; Chinguapin Park; Simpson Park; Holmes Run Park; Ben Brenman and Boothe Parks; and Joseph Hensley Park. She said some recommendations (Items 1-8) will be addressed in all six plans: improving way finding; improved trash receptacles/recycling; include universal accessibility, location public art, establishing parking policy and standards; upgrading utilities, installing bike racks and completion of a documentary study and archaeological excavations and incorporation of interpretive elements. Please See Park Plans for details of each plan.

#### **Discussion**

**Four Mile Run:** See Park Plan. Durham pointed out the fore bay on the eastern side of park. She said improvements will largely revolve around improving connectivity. The dog exercise area will be fenced in and relocated. Other upgrades include relocating the playground and multipurpose courts and clustering these together with seating and adding adult fitness equipment; community gardens are proposed. The end of Commonwealth Avenue is shown as green space, near the dead end. A turnaround will be created with the parking lot.

**Chinguapin Park:** See Park Plan. A feasibility study is underway to see if a 50 meter pool can be placed on this site near the current Recreation Center. Improvement of the loop road will feature an interior pedestrian loop marked as a quarter mile: relocating the playground clustering along with adult fitness and multipurpose courts and a new shelter.

*The Chair said that following up on the previous stormwater discussion that part of the loop road should be resurfaced with pervious green pavers. This would make the park appear much larger and greener. She noted the gray area where T&ES proposes to install storm water BMP.*

*Baum said that the old plan showed three fields, but there are not three fields there. Durham said due to the grading of the site, there are not really three quality fields there now. Beggs asked if area is programmed. Durham said yes, and there is a lot of open play. The plan is to regrade area to improve the quality of the field and to make it regulation size. There is still open passive area. A recommendation is to make it an artificial turf field that would accommodate a BMP under it.*

*Baum asked about possibly making it a two-way lane with turnaround and if this is the best place for it. Kagawa said typically three natural grass fields equal one turf field. Regarding the loop road, this has to do with access to the gardens, the idea is to get through here and access the more active areas of the park, while avoiding the more passive areas. In cases where additional parking is needed people could use the pervious roadway occasionally.*

*Baum said some of the residents in the neighborhood have expressed concern with the lights and fields. If we are recommending changes perhaps we should make changes to road configuration it may make sense to make a separation.*

*Durham said the plan also recommends doing additional tree planting to create a buffer between the park and residential neighborhood.*

*Cromley said separating active and passive uses was desirable. He said the current community gardens are the size of a full size regulation field, and asked if gardens could be moved to a number of smaller locations.*

*Durham said that feedback from the community was that they loved the gardens that are currently there. Relocation of the existing gardens was not considered in this case.*

**Simpson Park:** See Park Plan. Highlights include improving the playground, adjusting borders, adding natural play features and additional seating and creating more open space for open play areas. The plan includes improved connectivity throughout the park and way-finding. Another recommendation is to improve to the dog park, a SUP was approved for lighting last fall. Creating connection from Route 1 and a green alley.

*Baum asked if lights could also be placed on the tennis courts. Durham said that there are lights on the fields, and that no feedback was received to include a request for lights on tennis courts.*

**Holmes Run Park:** See Park Plan. A high priority is removal of invasive plant species and improving view sheds for safety and ecological health. Other improvements include modifying the James Marx-All Veterans Park to enhance passive uses, including creating visibility from the street to the memorial. Additional improvements include adding lights to the Beatley Library Bridge adjoining the north side of the trail, which was a frequent request as the area is highly used for transportation, and installing a bridge to connect “All Veterans Park” to the library site.

*Durham said there are existing community gardens at this park, and that some improvements will be done around that area.*

**Ben Brenman and Boothe Parks:** See Park Plan. Durham said this park which is in Cameron Station already has a plan in place. Key items proposed for improvement include adding lights to the dog park for safety; adding lights to the bridge and pathway; and clustering activities to make the area more active.

*Forbes expressed concern regarding the proposal to remove the volleyball courts and asked for the reasoning behind this. He said the courts are poorly maintained, and this may discourage use. He said the proposal to remove the courts at this site and at Chinquapin, will result in removal of about half the volleyball courts in the City. He cautioned staff against this proposal,*

*stating that instead maintenance of courts should be looked at. Durham said that volleyball courts did not come up as a priority on the recent community Needs Assessment. Kagawa said that volleyball courts are being added at Potomac Yards. Forbes said this is contrary to the argument that there is not a recreational need for the sport. Baum suggested staff obtain more feedback on the usage/desire for volleyball in the City. Atkins asked if City's multiuse courts exclude volley ball. Durham said they would exclude only sand volleyball. The Chair reminded members that these are master plans. Durham said that each significant park project will go through a formal public community process prior to implementation.*

*Baum referred to Item - #14 said why not consider this area for community gardens to help lessen the wait list. Durham said there is a lack of water access in this area.*

**Joseph Hensley Park:** See Park Plan. Durham said that feedback was largely received from the sports groups; community involvement was limited due to the location of park, the park not being near a residential area. Desired improvements include upgrading fields to standard dimensions for adult sports, converting the soccer field to synthetic turf field, install access ramps and providing safety improvements and removing locked gate. Creating more activities in the park for adult fitness, play features, multi-use sports and a shelter, so that other activities can occur at Hensley in addition to sports. Durham said as the West End becomes more developed, more people will use this park.

*The Chair said that staff has proposed some positive changes for Hensley Park which is a highly used facility. Last year, there was a lot of discussion about development of this site by a private developer (St. James Group); we now know that land had limits on use, as a result the proposal failed. The next challenge is to determine what type of recreational facilities can occur at this site. Durham said there is a reference in the plan document to the potential future use of the Hensley site.*

**Next Steps:** See memorandum.

1. Endorsement or changes from Park and Recreation Commission based on public hearing comments.
2. Staff will make changes to the plan as advised by the PRC.
3. Provide plan to City Council Members to seek acceptance as an implementation strategy of the Open Space Master Plan.
4. Integrate recommendations into FY16 CIP process and seek alternative funding sources.

The Chair asked if the park plan needs to go through the Planning Commission. Durham referred to the memorandum included in packet from Faroll Hamer, Director, Planning and Zoning, "Review of Citywide Parks Improvement Plan for Consistency with the City's Master Plans", the memo states the plans are consistent with the City's Master Plans. "Since the Improvement Plan is considered an implementation plan in support of the 2002 Strategic Master Plan for Open Space, Parks and Recreation, formal Planning Commission review and public hearing is not required." Durham said the park plans do not need to go through the Planning Commission, however POS zoning would require Special Use Permits (SUP's) for any major improvements. There were no further comments on the proposed Citywide Park Improvement Plans. The Chair opened up the public hearing:

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

**Note:** Dana Wedeles received additional written comments: which were submitted into the record on February 20, 2014 and emailed to commission members - see copy attached. Andrew Findlay and Dale May provided written statements for the record.

The following persons participated in the public hearing on this item:

1. Marlon Lord, past President Chinquapin Advisory Group, said this is a very exciting plan, and that he is here to address the Chinquapin and Four Mile Run Plans. The Chinquapin's proposed improvements will come down to the details. They have ideas to improve area and are working with staff. Regarding converting or relocating the gardens, this could be expensive; also the area has a 20 ft. drop and would not be good for a playing field. He's interested in turnaround near garden and composting area, he thinks his concerns have been addressed. Restricting parking would be good. He would like to see project funded and approved by City Council.

The Chair said that it is always difficult to get enough parking spaces in or near parks, and that she hopes that the walking and bike trails will encourage people to leave their cars at home.

Cromley asked how many parking spaces will be lost.

Kagawa said he will have to get back with this information. He said the challenge with the loop road is it is two-sided parking this creates a safety issue. A lot of people use this road to run on; having parking only on one side, will make it safer for pedestrians.

Durham said findings show that there is more parking in the lots nearby that are not used. She pointed out new proposed parking lot. The spaces will be pervious and can be used for events. She said the loop road parking can be used during school hours. The Chair expressed concern about students using public parks for parking personal vehicles.

2. Frank Shafroth spoke in support of the plan. He's been involved with Chinquapin pool project, and commented that the chance for Alexandria to build a 50 meter pool and possibly bring the master swim team here is exciting.
3. Katherine Brown spoke in support of the Chinquapin Park Plan. She said that the community gardens should be maintained where they are, in their current form, and not broken up. The City's waiting list for community gardens has increased, in part due to the new national awareness of the value of community gardens. She encourages the City to try to get more gardens in other parks and in public and private spaces. The Chinquapin Advisory Board has been in place for 15 years; and there is a strong community of gardeners there who help foster community events. They board would welcome the opportunity to participate in the development of the community gardens plan.

*The Chair noted that the department of RPCA and the P&RC is currently working on a Community Gardens Policy to guide future decisions. She said there will be a menu of gardens types, including communal and children's gardens, however the format of future gardens may need to change from what is at Chinquapin due to land and space limitations.*

4. Bill Hendrickson, President Del Ray Citizens Association, spoke in support of improvements at Simpson Park. He stated that the park entrances and walkways need aesthetic improvements, along with improvements to the playground. He would like to see playground renovation and passive space done together. He said even though money not available for passive space currently in the CIP, having a design in place would provide an opportunity for the community to help raise funds. He has spoken with Park Planning staff (Wedeles) about working on a design for a green alley along north east end of park. Other points that have been discussed with staff: 1. The Plan proposes widening pathway through park - this makes

sense, however this may affect the gardens maintained by the master gardeners; these need to be protected, 2. The Plan also proposes encouraging more use of parking spaces along east Monroe Avenue for soccer - this may impact residents of the nearby apartment complexes, and 3. The Plan calls for improvement to the maintenance route so trucks can access soccer fields. He asked if it would possible to have the trucks come another way to create more green space.

5. Gary Carr spoke about the need to increase running tracks in the City of Alexandria, and said the running path being created at Chinquapin should be widened, to accommodate more people and allow for passing. He sees the turnaround as problematic, said a one-way street may be a better option. If events occur at the high school, the circle may cause gridlock. The 2013 Need Assessment identified the need for more walking, running, biking paths as a high priority. The City should incorporate more running paths, tracks and designated running areas into City park plans, to serve the community. The cost may be kept low by creating perimeter paths around existing structures. He also encourages the building of a running path near Four Mile Run Park, as it could benefit by its proximity to Arlington County, and help create synergy. Simpson Park- Carr said he sees some parking issues in this plan based on it having two baseball and soccer fields, and potential visitor parking problems. He will put his comments in writing.

*In response to Carr, the Chair said a pedestrian bridge will be built at Four Mile Run; the design is approved; project is not yet funded. She said there could be a loop that would go over to the Potomac Yard side and to the Mt. Vernon side. Carr said this is great, but the idea is to incorporate this path as a running path. The Chair said this is highlighted in the restoration plan for Four Mile Run. Regarding the need for more competitive running tracks in the City, staff should look to ACPS to help build these on school sites, and create less formal walking/running paths in addition.*

Kagawa thanked Mr. Carr for his advocacy and helping to support the addition of a running track at Francis C. Hammond Middle School. He said the track was also built due to the recommendation and support of the Park and Recreation Commission, and additionally, improvements are planned for the track at G.W. Middle School. Carr said the problem is that running tracks on school property are not available during school hours, also City fields with tracks don't have lights, and the fields with lights don't have running tracks. The City should investigate having running tracks on non-City property, that could allow availability 24/7.

6. Dale May, Chinquapin Garden Advisory Board – see written comments submitted for the record re: Chinquapin Park Plan. Proposal to add a turnaround loop at the end of service road bordering community garden. Information states that since road dead ends it causes drivers to conduct a 3-point turn damaging woodlands. Mr. May said he has never seen anyone back into the woods while turning around. He said there is a need for parking for the 15 new plots that will open soon. They would like to see the two boulders removed, to allow storage of mulch and wood chips storage. This could free up space for more parking between the lower service road and garden plots. Suggested installing logs to help designate parking areas. Expressed concerned that turnaround loop would take up valuable garden space. Information in item says a pervious surface will be designed to filter garden runoff. Incline in land is such that any runoff during storms will flow towards existing drain. The money could be better spent on other items (see letter).

7. Jennifer Hartenstine spoke on behalf of her neighbor Andrew Findlay. See written statement submitted by Mr. Findlay and read by Ms. Hartenstine. Mr. Findlay is opposed to the Chinquapin Park Improvement Plan, as it disrupts the character of the park's natural areas and passive space. He states that the glory of the park is the large open green space and trees there. The plan identifies a recent survey question #40; when asked what do people love about the park? Response: "the park's open space and natural setting reinforces the uniqueness of the large passive green space. Chinquapin Park has a serene and pastoral character which is clearly desired as an escape from more urban areas". The Plan makes no attempt to preserve Chinquapin's natural character, and moves activities into the open green space, impacting the passive areas of the park, and making the green space too busy. The reason for moving these activities into the green space are not substantive and have no connection to safety or user preferences. He states that it is premature to move activities pending proposed 50 meter pool. The cost estimates are high 7-9 million this is a lot of money to ruin what users said they like about the park. He requests that the P&RC not endorse this plan. See written comments.
8. Jennifer Hartenstine said that she is personally excited about the park plans, specifically the plan for Chinquapin Park and the proposed 50 meter pool. Her family uses the Chinquapin Center regularly. She has a few concerns about the traffic circle and availability of parking close to the center, she is glad this is being addressed.
9. Catherine Corp spoke regarding Four Mile Run Park Plan. Ms. Corp said she is glad to see the plan and it is a great process. Expressed concern about the placement of a community garden near her house without notice. The street is at a dead end and garden impacts neighborhood parking. She would also like to see an additional water fountain in this park. *The Chair said part of Cora Kelly sits on City park land perhaps people can use parking there.*
10. Elizabeth Wright, Chair Holmes Run Park Committee Edits to Plan - #12. Change N. Jordan St. to S. Jordan St. They are happy about #8 expansion of the fitness station, the equipment is used all the time by all ages. #10 divides the dog park into smaller areas, what is wrong with it. Some people have requested that night lights be installed at the dog park east of the library. She said during the summer it gets hot, dog users have got trees and water if fence could be moved it would provide shade. They are excited about the pedestrian lighting over the Beatley Bridge, and addition of lights. She asked if there a way to incorporate solar lighting and also at "All Vets Park".  
She stated the community gardens are a good use of public space, and help provide consistent use of land, which helps improve public safety. She is excited about expanding trails and connectivity. Regarding the trail markers at .25 miles she encourages staff to maintain this metric. They are working with the police and EMT's to have the trail markers incorporated into the City's GIS.  
*Durham said the loop road at Chinquapin would be marked 1/4 mile loop around. Other places would keep the same metric.*
11. Kevin Beekman, Four Mile Run Restoration Task Force, spoke in support of the Park Plans saying the park plan is fabulous. He wanted to highlight items not included in the plan, and problems with park entrance on Mt. Vernon Ave. Planning for Four Mile Run Park came up in the Arlandria Plan over 10 years ago. Stated that the intersection near Four Mile Run Park and Mt. Vernon Avenue needs to be reviewed due to high number of vehicle accidents. The curb cuts need to be reduced and integrated into intersections. The building the City acquired



also has an exit into the intersection. The Arlandria Plan was supposed to make certain changes to curb cuts by 2014. He would like to see further pedestrian improvements be designed at this intersection. When the SUP was renewed for the 24- Express property, a condition was added that the owners cooperate with the City in future on these issues. Durham had said this is a 10 year CIP item. Beekman said needs to be addressed somewhere in the master plan. Beekman also commented on the Four Mile Run Pump Station –SUP recently approved this is part of public open space but not addressed in the plan because it owned by the Sewer Authority. This area needs to be addressed.

*The Chair said she is familiar with the community's desire for improvements to this area, and asked Mr. Beekman to email her a visual with narrative, so it may be appended for the record.*

12. Jonathan Krall, Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, and member of the Four Mile Run Restoration Task Force, spoke in support of the Four Mile Run Plan, connectivity. He appreciates the work staff did to preserve the green space, and the focus to make non-motorized transportation improvements, as this is a key transportation route. He is also pleased to see the addition of trail makers at Holmes Run Park. He said that the City is doing an update to the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan this year. He would like the plan to focus on connectivity and safe routes. The Chair said a member of the P&RC will be appointed as part of that group.
13. Jim Clark spoke about the Chinquapin Park Plan and said that he has been working with RPCA staff to clear invasive plants from the area – project is about 60% complete. There is an opportunity at Chinquapin to improve wastewater treatment – something needs to be done there. He would like see more funding for invasive plan removal (\$36,000 allotted). He would like the City to do some foliage spraying of the ivy there;-and would be willing to pay for round-up.
14. Rupert Munro, spoke regarding Ben Brenman Park. Mr. Munro said there is a patch of grass nest to the designated dog area and requested that the dog park fence be expanded to include that.
15. Catherine Hilliard - Ms. Hilliard did not speak but submitted form in support of Chinquapin Gardens.

The Chair commended the Department of RPCA staff for doing an excellent job on developing the Citywide Park improvement Plans. She said the public hearing comments provided broad overall support for these plans, and that specific concerns will be addressed when the SUP's for each park plan is done through the City's Planning and Zoning Department.

### **Commissioner Comments:**

McPherson: He agrees that RPCA staff has done a tremendous job. He said that most public comments centered around the park plan details, which will be flushed out later; he is glad the community has brought forward their concerns.

Forbes: He agrees that staff has done a great job with plans. He expressed concern, however, with the proposal to remove the volleyball courts at Ben Brenman. He said

decision is too hasty and that he would like more information on the rational. Mr. Forbes said that perhaps more people would use courts in City if they were better maintained. He said volley ball courts are very popular around the Lincoln Memorial in D.C. and that well maintained courts will generate more interest. Mr. Forbes said it is important to note that volley ball courts can be used for unplanned play, and that many other places in the City are programmed. He would be hesitant to remove these types of recreational facilities that there is clearly a need for.

Baum: Agreed that park plans are well done. She said she would like to see more areas for community gardens. Another issue brought forward is improvement for parking at Simpson field. While she doesn't advocate taking away green space, the creation of even a small amount of additional parking would be helpful. For example Ben Brenman Park has a small parking which serves them well. McPherson said inadequate parking at the nearby development may be impacting area. Durham said most developments in the City receive parking reductions, and that there are ways to address this, such as installing two hours parking zones. She said a key part of all park plans will be inclusion of way finding to help direct people to parking and amenities nearby.

Coleman: commended RPCA staff and Dana Wedeles for their work. She is pleased to see improvements to parks and particularly Ben Brenman and Boothe Parks, in the west end, as well as the planned pedestrian bridge near Beatley Library.

Akins: great work to staff. She thanked the members of the community for their participation tonight and for participating in meetings over the last two years, and getting other neighbors involved. As a result, the final draft park plans include lots of public input. Overall she loves the plans and the holistic view of looking at all park plans together. She suggested individual comments/details about each park plans, including concern about maintaining volleyball courts and unprogrammed play areas, be noted in plans, for future reference. The Four Mile Run community stated a desire for community gardens as a priority; we need to put these in places where there is water access. Include these types of details in plans even if it doesn't change plan immediately.

Cromley: said the demographics in City may change in future and affect survey feedback. He's not against comments regarding retaining location/format of the current Chinquapin community gardens; however the existing format cannot be replicated in City due to the lack of land. He also agrees with Forbes comments about maintaining un-programmed active areas for unplanned activities for people of ages and skill abilities. The Chair said that Alexandria City needs more small scale activities that take up small areas of land.

Chair Noritake: commented on the Four Mile Plan, where the plan discussed greening the end of Commonwealth Ave. The Director of Planning and Zoning asked that additional language be added acknowledging this as public right-of -way, she will provide language. The Chair will use comments to draft letter on behalf of the P&RC endorsing the Citywide Parks Improvement Plan with a series of bullets and caveats. She asked members to send her any specific language.

Laura Durham noted that Fort Ward Park was not included a public meeting will be held on Monday.

### **REGULAR MEETING**

#### **Items for Action:**

- III. Approval of Summary Minutes: January 16, 2014.  
McPherson moved to approve the minutes. Brune seconded. All were in favor.
- IV. Public Hearing: Consideration of Citywide Large Park Plans:  
See Item-A above
- V. Consideration of Maury School Plan (ACPS): The Chair said this item was discussed at the last meeting. They are seeking approval of the plan. Akins asked about possible storm water BMP being placed at Maury School and if this should be addressed by T&ES as possible future location, as they are putting in a turf field. Kagawa said that some storm water issues are on-site and some are caused upstream. The staff is looking at doing a BMP storage underneath the school field. The Commission asked if T&ES is aware of this. Kagawa said the Maury staff is working with Park Planning staff. The project is still going to go through the Interdepartmental Review Process where all departments will comment including T&ES. To clarify question about funding if work is school property it is part of the school CIP. Baum asked that language about having a storm water management system be added to the P&RC letter so that it is not overlooked.  
Action: The Chair said the P&RC will say they support the efforts, not endorse the Maury plan, the commission agreed she will draft a letter.
- Action: Baum motioned that the Chair write a letter of support for the Maury School Playground Plan. Brune seconded. All were in favor.
- VI. Reappointment of Gina Baum – Planning District I: The Chair noted that Baum is up for reappointment and asked if there were a motion for reappointment. Brune moved to reappoint Gina Baum to the P&RC, Forbes seconded. All were in favor. The Chair provided a letter for the record and asked that it be forwarded to Clerk of Council Jackie Henderson.

**Items for Information and discussion:**

- VII. Annual Civic Awards Program Discussion - Jack Browand.  
Browand said that no nominations were received last year, and asked how the Commission wanted to proceed this year. He said a copy of the general criteria is included the packet. Forbes said that last year was a unique year, and that the Commission should proceed using the current Civic Awards program. Browand agreed there are many potential nominees; however, he said a challenge has been getting the nominations in. Browand said that he would appreciate the Commission's help in soliciting nominations this year, and that he will put together some names for the next week meeting.
- VIII. **Division Updates: For Full Staff Reports, Please go to:**  
**(<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCCOMBINEDREPORTSFEBRUARY2014.pdf>)**
- A. **Recreation Programs and Service Update** - William Chesley, Deputy Director - See Staff Report. Chesley provided handouts of the new "2014 Summer of Smiles" brochure, "Your Experience Matters" pamphlet, and a "Program Interest Survey". The Program Interest Survey will be launched soon electronically and in hard copy; feedback will help staff to make future programming decisions.
- B. **Park Operations Report** – Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director -See Staff Report.

Community Gardens Policy Update: The Chair said she received many letters of concern that went to City Council on this item. The Chinquapin Advisory Group expressed concerns about proposed non-residents policy, and the marriage penalty for garden plots which was put in the rules several years ago. The Director RPCA attended a meeting with the Chinquapin Advisory Group to help address their concerns. Tiwari said moving forward, that preference will be given to City residents over non-residents, when there is a waiting list. Non-residents who have been gardening continuously for five or more years will be allowed to renew their plots, this will affect about 5 persons. Non-resident gardeners, who have held a plot for less than five years, will be allowed to renew for another year, if requested, this will affect 4 persons. Tiwari said non-residents will have to apply each year and that the plot license is non-transferrable. Staff is also looking at fees/cost recovery for non-resident gardener. This has been shared with Marlin Lord, President Chinquapin Advisory Group. Tiwari confirmed that the marriage penalty is not new, and said it has always been included in garden policy. The Chair said a question that came up when she met with a smaller garden group, is how to handle active military personnel while on deployment. Baum suggested providing them with a temporary plot. The Chair said this has provided a good dialogue on how gardens will be operated in the future.

C. **Marketing, Special Events, Waterfront Operations** - Jack Browand, Division Chief. See Staff Report.

D. **Park Planning, Design & Capital Development Reports** – Ron Kagawa, Division Chief and Team. See Staff Reports.

**IX. Report from Commissioners** (verbal updates):

A. Waterfront Commission - Gina Baum: Schooner coming April 11- 14- docking fees waived. Boating Festival planned for May 17-18, admission \$10- proceeds will be split between the Seaport Foundation and RPCA. Blackwell Hitch Restaurant at Food Court: Architectural Plans are complete and going through the approval process. Windmill Hill Bulkhead Replacement. RFP is being reissued. NVRC- Northern Virginia Regional Commission responded to a grant proposal for a ferry to move commuters on 4 to 5 routes. Lower King St- multimodal feasibility study continues.

Browand reminded Commissioners of the upcoming meetings: 1. Community Meeting #4: Olin Studio – Concept Design Refinements - March 6, 6:30 p.m., United Way Worldwide, 701 N. Fairfax St., and 2. Final Joint Meeting - Waterfront & Park and Recreation Commission - Concept Design Refinements, March 13, 6 p.m., Durant Center, 1609 Cameron St. The Chair asked Mr. Browand to send out reminders about these meetings.

B. Youth Sport Committee-Brian McPherson - no updates.

C. Four Mile Run - Ripley Forbes – no updates.

D. Freedmen's Cemetery. - No updates.

E. ACPS & Capital Improvements - Judy Guse-Noritake – no updates.

F. Ft. Ward - Ripley Forbes - no updates.

G. ACPS School Projects- Judy Guse-Noritake - no updates.

H. Jefferson Houston School - William Cromley- no updates.

I. Open Space - Judy Guse-Noritake- no updates.

J. Braddock Plan Park- Judy Guse-Noritake- no updates.

K. Patrick Henry School Update- no updates.

L. Aquatics Update- Jennifer Atkins- no updates.

M. Eisenhower West Planning - Judy Noritake: The Chair permanently appointed Vice Chair, Judith Coleman, to the Eisenhower West Planning Group as the P&RC representative. Coleman said she attended the first meeting held yesterday, and that a key question that was asked was what are the boundaries of Eisenhower West Small Area Plan (SAP). Coleman said she will have further information on boundaries and rational at a future meeting. The Director, RPCA Spengler attended the meeting. Coleman asked that Cameron Run Regional Park be included as part of discussion, as their lease is up soon. He said reaction so far to including this in the plan boundary has not been favorable. The City P&Z staff has an ambitious schedule for this SAP. The City will work with a transportation consultant and a general consultant; they have not been hired yet. The Chair said if we look at any updates to the Open Space Plan and updates from the Needs Assessment that staff should provide graphics on how many children are in each community showing areas are not just Recreation Centers. Durham said staff can provide graphics; the challenge will be getting the boundaries defined. Coleman said they want to do an online survey on how people use the area and what they would like to see there. Coleman asked that demographics questions including number of people in household be included. Durham said related to the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA), staff will need to bring the public process back before the P&RC to help determine what is the best use of the 30 acres for future years. Durham said the City is initiating a public process based on the Needs Assessment and that a letter has been sent to the NVRPA; she will provide copy to the Chair. Durham said the letter was about lease renewal for water slide and options for renewal of lease are being considered. Dinesh said that the NVRPA still has 7-8 years left on their lease. There were no other question/comments.

X. See Public Comments on Draft Park Plans - Item #A. There were no other public comments on other topics.

XI. Agenda items for March 20, 2014, meeting and location - to be determined.

XII. List of upcoming public meetings. A list was included in packet.

Baum motioned to adjourn the meeting. Brune seconded. All were in favor.  
The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

/RD

Revised April 9 2014